The Marker Lamp

Volume 52 Number 4 Fall 2006

Make plans now to attend the Hill Country Special next year and see this beautiful layout of Chuck Ellis and maybe even operate on it. See you in June.

HILL Special COUNTRY

June 6-10, 2007
Make plans to attend now!

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The Marker Lamp

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EDITOR
CHUCK LIND
507 Kyle Avenue
College Station, Texas 77840
(979) 696-8862
E-mail: cr-lind@tamu.edu

ADVERTISING &
MAILING LIST
Elbert Smith
518 Granada Drive
Garland, Texas 75043-5118
(972) 681-0117
E-mail: barbel_518@sbcglobal.net

Visit the LSR's web page at:
www.lonestarregion.com

The editorial policy of **The Marker Lamp**, the official publication of **The Lone Star Region**, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroading, within the confines of good taste and responsibility.

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Articles appearing in **The Marker Lamp** are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of **The Lone Star Region** or **The National Model Railroad Association**.

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(972) 681-0117

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Lone Star Region Call Board

LSR Officers

PRESIDENT
GERALD H. SCHOENBERG, MMR
1039 Clinton Street
Carrollton, Texas 75007-4828
(972) 242-9053
E-mail: arrjerry@aol.com

VICE-PRESIDENT
BILL MCPHERSON
4402 Vista Creek Drive
Rowlett, Texas 75088-1818
(972) 463-9721
E-mail: tpbill@attglobal.net

SECRETARY-TREASURER
Elbert Smith
518 Granada Drive
Garland, Texas 75043-5118
(972) 681-0117
E-mail: barbel_518@sbcglobal.net

BOARD ADVISOR
JAMES E. PACKER, MMR
3405 San Bar Lane
Colleyville, Texas 76034-8661
(817) 514-7291
E-mail: jim.packer@sbcglobal.net

SECRETARY-EMERITUS
EUNICE LINDA
3028 Cumberland
Waco, Texas 76707-1219
(254) 754-5535
E-mail: jlinda@hot.rr.com

LSR Directors-At-Large

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
ROBERT (BOB) BRAY
1820 Spruce Lane
Benbrook, Texas 76126-3910
(817) 249-4965
E-mail: brayrlja@sbcglobal.net

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
TRACY MITCHELL, MMR
12018 Troulon
Houston, Texas 77072-4032
(281) 495-1669
E-mail: traymit@houston.rr.com

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE
Wm. B. (BILL) DRYDEN, JR.
1335 Donovan Street
Gonzales, Texas 78629
(469) 964-8571
E-mail: bdr149airmail.net

LSR Division Directors

COWCATCHER DIVISION (1)
CHRIS ATKINS
1633 Parkside Trail
Lewisville, Texas 75077
(214) 222-1285
E-mail: chris@railroadermodelers.com

BAYOU DIVISION (2)
JACK GREEN
1265 Cornerstone Drive
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70810
(225) 767-4692
E-mail: jwg3rd@aol.com

NORTH EAST TEXAS DIVISION (3)
DUANE RICHARDSON
1122 Holland Drive
Garland, Texas 75040
(972) 495-6375
E-mail:
duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com

CEN-TEX DIVISION (4)
ROBERT B. (BOB) ALSTON, JR.
3405 Southwinds
Lorena, Texas 76655
(254) 857-3906
E-mail: drtrainrba@hughes.net

DIVISION (5)
DAVE LAMBERTS
3717 95th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79423-3811
(806) 792-7244
E-mail: DavidWL1944@aol.com

DIVISION (6)
DOYLE P. BOND, MMR
7828 Pat Booker Rd. Apt. 612
Live Oak, Texas 78233
(210) 494-6663
E-mail: doyle.p.bond@att.net

DIVISION (7)
DON P. KIMMELL
9132 Mansfield Road
Shreveport, Louisiana 71118
(318) 798-7718
E-mail: prrdpkjr@msn.com

TEXAS GULF DIVISION (8)
RAY BYER
2607 Thomas Ave.
Pasedena, Texas 77506-2940
(281) 482-4987
E-mail: (none)

LSR Chairs

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
AL BOOS, MMR
130 Surrey Lane
Universal City, Texas 78148-3938
(210) 658-4548
E-mail: AandVBoos3@aol.com

PUBLICATIONS/EDITOR
CHUCK LIND, MMR
507 Kyle Avenue
College Station, Texas 77840
(979) 696-8862
E-mail: cr-lind@tamu.edu

CONTEST
CHUCK LIND, MMR
507 Kyle Avenue
College Station, Texas 77840
(979) 696-8862
E-mail: cr-lind@tamu.edu

CONVENTION
BILL MCPHERSON
4402 Vista Creek Drive
Rowlett, Texas 75088-1818
(972) 463-9721
E-mail: tpbill@attglobal.net

HISTORIAN
JIM LONG, MMR
2404 Creek Ridge
Pearland, Texas 77581-5728
(281) 482-4987
E-mail: (none)

DISPATCHER N/HO-SCALE CARS
EUNICE LINDA
3028 Cumberland
Waco, Texas 76707-1219
(254) 754-5535
E-mail: jlinda@hot.rr.com

EVENTS
Wm. B. (BILL) DRYDEN, JR.
1335 Donovan Street
Gonzales, Texas 78629
(469) 964-8571
E-mail: bdr149airmail.net

WEB SITE
DUANE RICHARDSON
1122 Holland Drive
Garland, Texas 75040
(972) 495-6375
E-mail: duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com

NOMINATIONS
GARY MCMILLS
649 Broadmoor Ave.
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70815-4016
(225) 930-0387
E-mail: santafe@tlxnet.net

MEMBERSHIP
DAVID DAVIS
P.O. Box 110852
Carrollton, Texas 75011-0852
(972) 245-5987
E-mail: ddandjd@gte.net

EDUCATIONAL CHAIR
ROBERT "Rocky" JACKSON
301 Teakwood Lane
Cedar Hill, Texas 75104-2942
(972) 291-5453
E-mail: carrock@aol.com

PHOTOGRAPHY CHAIR
DAVE LAMBERTS
3717 95th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79423-3811
(806) 792-7244
E-mail: dwl1944@cs.com

NON-RAIL
VIRGINIA FREITAG
1835 Alta Vista
Houston, Texas 77023-2503
(713) 926-2993
E-mail: vgfreitag@houston.rr.com

YOUTH
TOM BROWNING
5923 Overdowns Circle
Dallas, Texas 75230-4039
(214) 692-9784
E-mail: thomascb@ev1.net

President's Message

by Jerry Schoenberg, MMR

Hi All,
I hope you all had a great summer. We are now entering the fun time of the year for our hobby which includes trade shows, operating trips and layout projects. Let's enjoy it! I chose a topic this time that I hope you will not find to be controversial. Any similarities to individuals are real (including yours truly), but certainly not meant to be offensive. More importantly, I hope it will help in making our hobby more fun and maybe even supply some humor. My comments are nothing more than opinions.

Operation:
Perhaps the human natures that are exposed during "operations" are the most humorous when viewed from afar. A waitress once asked, "What are you guys all doing in town?" "Well, we are here to "operate" model railroads." "I don't understand", she said. "You all seem so glum and unhappy." Granted, we get tired on these occasions, but her point was well made. We break out in a cold sweat when we don't understand the operating procedures or a manifest; we are embarrassed when we make a mistake; and we dread the thought of our layout not performing properly. We even complain that the bell on someone's locomotive is too loud. Did you ever notice that those that have a sound locomotive love sound, and those that don't, hate it? During an operating session, I have viewed the frustration of trying to uncouple a car, or work through some dirty track or a car that derails. We often miss the obvious: clean the track, couple by hand and remove the bad car. Have FUN!

Command Control:
Command Control has provided the greatest change to model railroading in our lifetime. It is amazing however, how often we complain about it. Most of the time, our human errors or decisions to not follow the directions, is the cause of our problems. Much like a computer it's - garbage in, garbage out. A friend was very unhappy because when he had seven sets of passenger cars (with lights) controlled by the same DCC booster, there was a power problem. The same location had problems when eight or more Broadway Limited locomotives were in the same block. Well, the answer is simple - don't put that much in the same block. Kill switches on heavily loaded tracks and additional boosters are obvious answers. There was a reluctance to add a booster due to the expense. Humor, in this case, is the fact that a booster would be much cheaper than one of the BLI locomotives. Sometimes there is a tendency of lumping shorts, reverse loop problems and operating errors all in one frustration. If we solve one problem at a time, things gradually get better. The good news is that many layouts run very well so it is just a matter of making the changes and asking for help. Remember, even in the worst case, Command Control beats the heck out of "block control".

Technical advances:
Like it or not, our hobby has gotten more technical in many ways. This can be very frustrating and cause human behavior traits. As an example, the documentation for Command Control systems or setting the CV's of a locomotive can be overwhelming. When this is coupled with the ability to interface systems with computers, some simply throw up their hands and are afraid to join the new generation of model railroading benefits. Again, the good news is, there is always a way around what overwhelms you. You don't have to set all the CV's. The factory settings do quite well. As a matter of fact, learning how to return your locomotive to factory settings may be all you need to know. Maybe you can join a club or call on a friend. There is always a technical expert that can help you. I have been so upset in trying to find an electrical short that my wife found it necessary to scurry in a different direction until I found it. It was not a life threatening event! I know of one solution that was used to find the "dreaded" short. The modeler applied 110V to the power bus and looked for smoke. Yes, this found the short, but also burned up everything connected to the mainline bus including the Command Control. When

Continued page 5

View from the Spar Pole

By Chuck Lind, MMR

With the last issue I started my fifth year as your editor of the Marker Lamp. I could only do this job with the help of you, the members of this region who keep sending in the stories and reports for each issue. I am always looking for new articles and photos of what is happening around the LSR. Send me your stories, photos, along with ideas of what you would like to see in future issues.

In August I attended the Narrow Gauge convention, as I do each year, and this time it was in Durango, the Mecca of Narrow Gauge. The convention drew between 1,600 and 1,800 depending on whose figures you believe. First stop was Chama to chase some trains and ride a photo special that had some great runbys. From there we headed to Durango so I could drop some items off in the contest room and then off to the west following the RGS route to see what was left. Traveling to Dolores, Rico, Ophir Loop, Trout Lake and Vance Junction. While looking at some of the remains and trying to piece the trackwork together, it was a great day despite the rain that followed us part of the day. We spent the night in Ouray where we took in and photographed many of the old buildings. Then headed on to Silverton where we toured the town and its buildings, as well as took some of the old backroads exploring some of the old mine sites that surround the town. We finally made it back to the convention Wednesday evening and made our way to the vendor room to pick up some of those goodies you can only find at the convention. A couple days of clinics, followed by an evening ride up to Cascade for drinks and a BBQ dinner. The trip back was nothing short of wonderful-in the dark with the glow from the windows and the firebox reflecting off the canyon walls, what a way to end a great week.

All things have to end so it was back to Texas, the heat, and time to get the railroad ready for the Houston Layout tours.

20 Years of Model Railroading

by Bob Sabol

Recently I was thinking about Model Railroading and realized that I have been involved in a semi-serious way for about 20 years. Semi-serious for me has been maintaining an interest and modeling on a part-time basis during this time and still excited to be a part of the hobby. A serious Model Railroader probably has a running railroad about the size of my house. I suspect most of us fall into the semi-serious category.

As many modelers, I started out with a Lionel set for Christmas from my parents. I remember after the initial "work train" my annual Christmas gift was an additional car. I now know that that stretched my parents' budget. I sure appreciate that now and I still have those Lionel trains. A side note about that Lionel set is that my two boys were not even aware of it until I put it up when they were in their mid teens. They wanted to know why I didn't let them play with it or bring it down sooner. Simple answer – it is mine.

After getting married and eventually moving to Missouri City in 1973, we had a really big 2,000 square foot house. With not enough furniture to fill the house, I set up a small operation in what should have been the formal living room. My first try on a layout and looking back it really did not look all that good. Kids then started growing and we needed the room. Bye, Trains. While the boys were still in high school, I was a Scout Master and one of the projects I had the troop do was a modular setup worked on by dads and scouts. It was fun and a neat night when we ran trains at the scout meeting.

From about '75 to '86, raising 3 kids was a full time job. When they started to graduate high school and leave for college I was thinking maybe I needed to fill the void. My brother in NJ was starting to dabble in HO trains and said I should look into the hobby as a serious sideline. Around 1986, I started on a more serious note (he stopped until about 1 year ago). Around this time I subscribed to Model Railroader. Looking at what people are able to do started me salivating. About then the NMRA convention was in Houston. I joined LSR and NMRA and wanted to see what Model Railroading was all about. My first layout tours occurred during the convention. Houston is blessed with so many talented craftsmen and I got to see layouts that were in magazines. Wow. The hurricane that was in town at the time didn't lessen the fun.

What was I going to do? Learning about John Allen, seeing local quality layouts, I said if I get into this I need to learn how to do this hobby with some degree of craftsmanship. I knew very little about all aspects of model trains. I got books on layouts, wiring, scenery and everything else. Couple of problems – no room in the house to build a running layout and I didn't know anyone to ask for help. As a beginner one feels inadequate and being around the "pros" probably didn't help my cause. Now I know that model railroaders are more than happy to share their knowledge. My interest leaned more to structures and scenery, so that is where I wanted to start. One year I bit the bullet and invested in a Fine Scales Miniature kit. The picture in MR was truly outstanding. It must have taken me a year and half to do J. Barongould Co. Tannery. I was so nervous my hands would shake. When I was finished I was kind of proud of myself and entered the display at a LSR convention. Sure learned a great deal from that experience. My hands don't shake as much now, but whether I am building another kit or building from scratch I am amazed at what the results could be. Until about a 2 years ago I continued to build dioramas and kept them in my office at work. Several years ago I had the honor of visiting the Franklin and South Manchester railroad of George Sellous. Talk about getting pumped up!

For the past 20 years, my wife and I have attended most LSR conventions and several national NMRA conventions. This routine has sure kept me charged. There is always something to learn. Good layouts comes in all sizes (N to G). I don't believe I ever attended a bad clinic. But I must admit a few were a little deep and I should have attended Clinic 101 first.

I remember one LSR convention I attended in Shreveport, LA. Somehow I got involved in an operating session. Never heard the term before, nor do I remember in whose house it was located. Since then I have signed up for operating sessions whenever possible. The last time the LSR convention was in Houston, I again signed up and was assigned to Peter Bryan's house and layout. He has invited me back on a regular basis and through all these collective experiences, I have come to really enjoy this end of model railroading. DCC sure helps. Thanks, Peter.

Let's talk about my present layout. A couple of years ago one of the kid's old rooms became my train room [thank you Liz (my wife)]. The room is small (10' x 10') with a closet. For a one-man operation, I found I could keep myself busy for a while. The Jersey Central West has mountains in the background, names of NJ towns, steam, diesel, DCC, and some sound. I was able to get two circles for continuous running along with several industrial areas for an operating session. Of course one operator (me) usually has his hand full trying to run 3 trains simultaneously. I am working on structures and that should keep me going for several more years.

So what is the point of my model railroading history? Over 20 years I found ways to keep my interest going and by doing it part-time I did not suffer burnout. I think that many of us who fall into model railroading at a similar level to mine need to support one another and not feel that success is judged by the quantity (size) of our railroad. Remember that our railroad is really ours and as long as we find it challenging at the level we set for ourselves, we can find that it will give us decades of fun and not suffer burnout along the way. Over a period of time, we will have much improvement in our skills and have a layout we can be proud of being viewed by others and ourselves. Along the way, we also run into many others who share our interest and always seem willing to share their knowledge.

Thank you all for making Model Railroading such a fun part of my life.

Youth Membership Program

By Tom Browning

During 2005/2006 the Youth Membership Program campaign for the Lone Star Region got six young members on board. I wish to thank the Division Directors and Region Officers/Directors-At-Large for the support you have given to make the Youth Membership Program a success.

We are now in the 2006/2007 campaign and I am happy to announce the following progress:

Division 3 – **Duane Richardson** has nominated **Billy Jackson**, age six, of Cedar Hill, Texas, to be the next youth member. **Billy** is succeeding **Adam Wynne** for whom we are so proud! Division 4 – **Bob Alston** has a youth lined up and paperwork in the works.

It is my sincere hope that all of the divisions will bring those young people into our organization. Young candidates are all around us and you can help find them for your division director. One example of where to find that youth is within your own ranks such as the father or grandfather of a young person or the friend of one of those young people. Another example is the member, or the child or grandchild of a member of a model railroad club to which you belong. So, if you know of a young person that you would like to nominate for your division, please contact your director right away.

Bob Brendle is close to finalizing the updated rules for eligibility for the Sam Brendle Scholarship for the 2007 LSR Convention. Keep an eye on the website at http://www.lonestarregion.com.

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Eunice Linda, Dispatcher
3028 Cumberland
Waco, TX 76707-1219
254-754-5535
E-mail: jlinda@hot.rr.com

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you get upset trying to find help, remember there are lots of model railroaders that are your technical support. This source is much more sympathetic than the "hard to understand" person that you get when looking for AOL or software support.

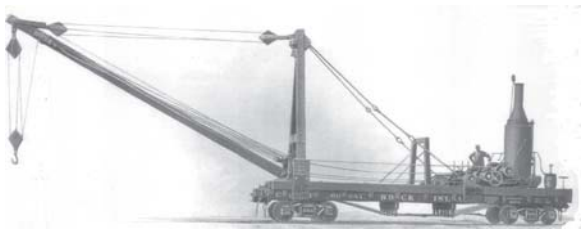
Vendors:

When it comes to dealing with vendors, we all get frustrated in one way or another. Again, we often forget we are dealing with a hobby, and vendors do not supply anything that is critical to our health. It is not unusual for vendors to advertise a product that has not been produced. Only if orders are adequate will the product be built. The opposite of this also meets with great criticism. When a vendor does not keep us updated on what they are doing until it is completed, we feel left out. Soundtraxx is a good example of this "can't win" problem.

They announced steam sound decoders before they were ready, and we were very impatient. Now we don't know the schedule of when diesel sound decoding will be available, and we are critical. The discussion groups have been very vocal on both these strategies. The area of patent controls also produces some annoying situations. We blame companies for not ignoring the patents or legal threats of other vendors. Should we expect them to? And, when a vendor spends time, money and efforts to upgrade a product, many complain bitterly, saying the upgrades should be free of charge. CVP's Easy DCC and QSI's decoders fall into this category. Upgrading a computer, television or household appliance is much more expensive, but seems to be more acceptable. In both cases, the decision is up to us. Actually, we are often fortunate that we can upgrade our equipment when compared to a total new purchase.

We are very impatient and seem to be getting worse. When we want a new locomotive or Command Control part, we want it now. Yet, when we go to a parts department of our car dealership, we accept that the part will not be available and must be ordered. We want our layout up and running right away. If we spend a month on a structure, and we have 100 structures to build, do the math. We must accept that we might not ever finish the layout, or we must purchase more structures in a completed form. Both procedures are very acceptable. Remember, we are not all experts in the many facets of our hobby, but may be great in one or two. As an example, when it comes to scenery/structures, I love the "3' rule". If it looks good from three feet, it is good for me, and I wear glasses.

In conclusion, the most important message of these comments is "**HAVE FUN**". Let's not take our hobby too seriously. The benefits are huge. We gain the great feeling of achievement, friendships and sharing. It keeps us off the street, and our spouses usually know where we are, even if it is under the layout or in the garage. **Things get better every day.**



All Aboard for Non-stop Fun

The Hill Country Special, the 2007 Annual Convention, will arrive in Round Rock on June 6 and will be there until the 10th. That's right! We are going to have 5 days of the best fun Central Texas model railroaders can put together. In fact, we really would like to have more days to put in all there is to do in the Austin area modeling community. Here is a glimpse of some of the activities that are planned.

Our Convention will open on Wednesday, June 6, 2007, at six o'clock with a flurry of clinics and several operating sessions. The clinics will be held in three of our spacious conference center rooms. Clinics will be going virtually all the time and are being organized by the clinic chairman, Chuck Wilson. As of this writing, we have about 40 of our 50 places filled on the clinic line-up. Some of the topics that are expected are modeling timber trestles and a hands-on session, hand laying turnouts, a DCC topic or two, operations of and the story the Western Pacific in Austin Texas, sound in steam locomotives, and many, many more.

The Austin area has many magazine feature type model railroads which will be available for operating sessions. This treat can be enjoyed on opening night (Wednesday) and on Friday. A few of the layouts that are committed are owned by Chuck Ellis, Jack Merkel, Tom Pearson and several others. More info will be available soon on our website at hillcountryspecial.com.

On Thursday evening we will have a great time when we ride the Bertram Flyer. Our journey will commence in Cedar Park, where the train will pull out of the station promptly at 6:15 PM in route to the town of Bertram. OK, I caught you thinking about how hot it may be in June in central Texas- not a worry. For a mere $15 more a person, your party can ride in the air-conditioned comfort of the private lounge cars. Hurry, there is limited seating. So you are worried that you may be hungry- again not a worry. As you board, you will be given a tasty box supper and a choice of beverage. This should tide you over until we get to Bertram where you will be able to imbibe in a cup of coffee, tea or water and munch on some delicious snacks. Of course you will want to tour the recently restored Bertram station while the locomotive is turning round. After a short stay in town, we will saunter back on the train to complete a perfect evening of training.

But wait, this isn't just the same ol' convention. New to the Hill Country Special are the "Beginning Operations" clinics and a no-pressure opportunity to practice what you've learned, as well as to get an understanding of why this is probably the hottest trend in model railroading. Mike Barrett and friends have spruced up a section of David Barrow's Cat Mountain and Sante Fe layout, version 2, and will be showing novice and expert operators how to run it like the big boys. Instructions are included and will be as simple or complex as the operator can or wants to handle. This experience can be enjoyed throughout most of the event. There will be several closed sessions for the non-rails to participate in order to better understand their railroader.

Speaking of non-rail activities - this year will have an unprecedented number of activities from which to choose. An emphasis will be made for more clinics, the topics ranging from bead making to card making, from quilting to quilling. Also on tap will be a trip to historic Salado for shopping and lunch on your own. This trip won't be complete if you don't eat at the Stagecoach Inn restaurant, where you can savor a delicious meal and finish it off with one of their scrumptious Strawberry kisses. The evenings will have opportunities to attend Movie Night or Game Night, where treats will be provided. After all, what's a movie without popcorn and a soda? Don't forget to come to the railroad recipe party where some secrets of the finest cuisine to grace the rails will be unveiled. As you can see, there will be plenty of fun and activity for you non-rails too!

No convention would be complete without a self-guided layout tour. The Hill Country Special is carrying the banner high in this category. Many well-known layouts have already agreed to be on our tour and many other exceptional layouts will be making their premier at this convention. Don't miss this chance to visit many of them and learn some techniques from these proud owners. I can guarantee that it will be time well spent.

Don't forget the annual LSR banquet for a simply melt in your mouth Texas barbeque dinner. Our speaker, Margaret Coel, a New York Times award winning writer, will take us on adventures with her father and grandfather as she remembers their tales she has told in her book, *Goin' Railroadin'.*

There will also be the silent auction, prototype tours, and many chances to win one of our many door prizes. Our goal is that no one will go home empty handed. Our honored model railroad this year will be John and Eunice Linda's *Milwaukee and Southwestern.*

As you can see there will be plenty to do in Round Rock this June at the convention. The above is just a brief description of the activities to expect. More information along with a registration form can be found in the near future on our website (hillcountryspecial.com), in the next Marker Lamp or by receiving our regular e-mail notices which will begin soon. Don't miss this incredible opportunity for non-stop fun at the Hill Country Special.

See ya there!

There is a link to the
Hill Country Special at the
LSR Web Site

The registration form will also be available there

Check it often to see what is happening

All Aboard for Non-stop Fun

Photos by Chuck Wilson

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

by Elbert Smith

LSR Financial Condition:
For the period of July 1 through September 30, 2006:

Beginning Total Gen. Fund	$4,643.16
Beginning Div. 1 Sub-Account	$1,700.97
Beginning LSR Gen. Fund Balance	$2,942.19
Total LSR Net Worth – All Accounts	**$39,448.31**

Income – Gen. Fund	
Ad, Pike	88.00
Cars & Decal Sales	75.12
Conv. 2006 Income	2,578.38
NMRA Region Rebate	845.25
Subscription Income	30.00
IRS Refund (Error on Payment)	213.36
Vanguard (CD Fund)	204.76
Vanguard (Convention Fund)	127.22
Vanguard (Life Fund)	126.61
Subtotal	**$4,288.70**

Disbursements – Gen. Fund	
Marker Lamp Print & Mail	1,022.18
Subtotal	**$1,022.18**

Ending Total Gen. Fund	$7,909.68
Ending Div. 1Sub-Account	$1,700.97
Ending LSR Gen. Fund Balance	$6,208.71
Total LSR Net Worth – All Accounts	**$42,714.83**

New Members –
Please take note of the following new NMRA/LSR members. Get them involved in the LSR and in your Division's activities.

Phillip Sonneburg, North Richland Hills, TX
Kevin Adams, Huntington, TX
Arianna Joelle Yingst, Hewitt, TX
Charles Irby, Corpus Christi, TX
Ronald Holter, Houston, TX
Henri Morris, Houston, TX
Jeffrey Sodoma, Fort Worth, TX
Paul York, North Richland Hills, TX
Allen White, Lafayette, LA
Dan Droogleever, Houston, TX
John Geisel, Arlington, TX
Bob Larance, Willow Park, TX
Phil Marsh, Burleson, TX
Barry Roberts, Grandview, TX
Robert Moroch, Frisco, TX
Alan Wetzel, Allen, TX
Roddy Wilder, Georgetown, TX
Ryan Hunt, Corpus Christi, TX
Jerry Hunt, Corpus Christi, TX
John Lee, San Antonio, TX
Frank Russo, Harris, TX
David Spring, Houston, TX

N Scale Crochet Hook

By Ray L. Baldwin

You're probably wondering what a crochet hook has to do with N scale modeling. Well, if you have ever tried to separate that N scale, diesel locomotive motor from its shell, then you know what a real hassle it is. With most instructions for either a Kato or Intermountain diesel locomotives, you poke four tooth picks up between the shell and the motor to loosen the catches between the two. Then you're instructed to gently pull down on one end using two of the tooth picks. If you're anything like me, you end up pulling off a ladder, pulling a truck completely apart, braking the tooth picks or any combination in the process.

Well, I'm in the process of converting of my fleet of Intermountain FT diesel locomotives to DCC using the Digitrax DN163I1A/B drop in decoders. I started with the B unit since there wasn't any soldering involved. As you can imagine, I did everything but pull the ladders off. But they got bent. It took me another 15 minutes to get the truck put back together again. Fortunately, they still worked.

So when it came time to start on the A unit, I started thinking that there has got to be an easier way. I remembered that my Mother use to knit and crochet. My wife picked up a few instruments over the years and tried her hand at it, way back when. Anyway, I had her dig up the smallest crochet hook she had. It was a Size 9 (1.40 mm) – perfect. After poking all four tooth picks in as instructed, I inserted the hook between the two ladders and hooked it into the indention of the bolt hole of the bolt that holds the two halves of the frame together on one end, and gently pulled the motor out without any hassle. My conversion efforts are now a whole lot easier.

As much as I tried to explain to my wife that this tool was now apart of my N scale model railroading tools, she would have no part of it. But she graciously volunteered to buy me another from a lady's craft shop. When it came in, the package had a web site on it: www.wrights.com. Click on – Products – Boye Needle – Boye Product Line (at the bottom) – Crochet Hooks. Look for Size 9 under Steel Crochet Hooks. Its product number on the package is 6208-9. Hope this helps all you N-Scalers.

Election Time

Fall is in the air and if you are considering, or if you know someone that is interested in, running for one of the LSR elected positions this spring please let me know. The positions that are up for election are Division Directors for 1, 3, 5,and 7. Also the positions of Secretary-Treasurer, Vice-President, and President are to be elected. Contact me at 225-930-0387 or santafe@tlxnet.net, Gary McMills - Nominations Chairman.

Up The Track

By Bill Dryden

Here is the list of the upcoming railroad events, of which I am aware, within the LSR and surrounding areas. I am providing all the information I have or can find about these shows. Further information is available through the NMRA Scale Rails and various trade magazines. Please send any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area to me via email at bdr149@airmail.net. Also, note that all show times and dates are subject to change. The upcoming events:

CONVENTIONS:

Lone Star Region 56th Annual Convention
Round Rock
Wingate Inn & Conference Center, 1209 N I H 35; Round Rock, TX
June 2007
For more information contact Bob Alston drtrainrba@aol.com; 3405 Southwinds, Lorena, TX 76655

RECURRING EVENTS AND MEETINGS:

Seasonal/Annual
The San Jacinto Model Railroad Club Annual Layout Tour Houston, Texas
The 2006 Fall Layout Tour will begin on Saturday, October 14th, and end on Sunday, December 3rd. The Tour Guide will be updated every Friday afternoon. Contact Peter Bryan peterb@pdq.net or (713) 939-8002. For more information, concerning the Fall Layout Tour, contact Mike Brignac, Sr. at njb2mab@sbcglobal.net

Houston Area Live Steamers
Houston, Texas
Located in Zube Park on US 290 northwest of Houston. On the third Saturday of each month, March through November, the members of Houston Area Live Steamers offer FREE rides to the public on our track. The dates and hours can be found at their website http://www.hals.org For LSR members, call or E-mail anytime for other special dates that you can attend.

LSR Division 3 Monthly Meeting
Garland, Texas
Nicholson Memorial Library, 625 Austin St., Garland, TX Third Saturday of each month. For more information contact Duane Richardson at duane@purgatoryanddevilriver.com or check the Division 3 page on the LSR website

North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs Meeting
Irving, Texas
The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (NTC) meets the third Tuesday of the month. Visit the NTC website www.dfwtrainshows.com for more information about the NTC, its meeting site or its member clubs. All model railroaders welcome.

EVENTS AND SHOWS:

November
4th - 5th Model Train Show and Shopping Extravaganza (Texas & Pacific Railway Museum)Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Adults $5; 12 & Under Free. Marshall Civic Center, Hwy 59. 2 miles north of I-20, Marshall, TX.
11th – 12th Fort Worth Area Train Show (North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs)
Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Amon Carter Hall/Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3401 W Lancaster Ave., Ft. Worth, TX.
Contact: Joe Pritchett joe.c.pritchett@lmco.com
Website: www.dfwtrainshows.com

December
2nd – 3rd 30th Annual Oklahoma City Train Show
Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Travel & Transportation Building, Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, OKC
Website: http://www.okctrainshow.com/
9th – 10th Great Train Exposition - Tulsa Train Show
Sat. & Sun. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Adults $7; 12 & Under Free
Tulsa Convention Center, 100 Civic Center, Tulsa, OK.
Contact: (630) 279-4048
9th – 10th Greenville Holiday Train & Collectable Show
Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sun. 12 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Historic Greenville Post Office, 2920 Lee St., Greenville, TX.
Contact: (630) 279-4048

January 2007
6th – 7th Waco's Railroad Wintertime Train Show
Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sun. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Adults $5; 12 & Under Free
Fine Arts Building; Heart of Texas Fairgrounds; 4601 Bosque Blvd.; Waco TX
Contact: (630) 279-4048
13th – 14th Dallas Area Train Show (North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs)
Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sun. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Plano Centre, 2000 East Spring Creek Pkwy., Plano, TX
Contact: Joe Pritchett joe.c.pritchett@lmco.com
Website: www.dfwtrainshows.com

February 2007
10th Train Collector's Association, Lone Star Division Meet
Sat. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Adults $6; Family $9
Katy VFW Hall, George Bush Drive & Ave D, Katy, TX
Contact: Ralph Halpin (210) 661-4238

Railfanning Off the Island

By Terry Mitchell MMR

As many of you already know, I moved from Houston to Vancouver Island, in British Columbia, Canada. However, you may not be aware, that I have moved again. I recently moved to a small town northeast of Calgary called Acme. It seems that I moved to Acme about 10 years too late. There used to be a Canadian Pacific line through town. As best as I can figure out, it was pulled in 1996. But Alberta is a happenin' place for rail activity. There are CP and Canadian National lines galore. My wife works in Drumheller, in the Badlands of Alberta. (This is a great location to make western movies, Shanghai Noon and The Unforgiven are two of the most popular recent ones made there, and there are MANY music videos too.) The line there is CN. It started out as Canadian Northern RR. During the 1920's, there were railroads failing all over Canada. The government bailed them out similar to what happened with Conrail in the States, to create the Canadian National Railroad.

Anyway, the line in Drumheller is CN, and they run trains, lots of them, mostly at night. There is the odd train during daylight, but they are uncommon. I work in Calgary. On my way to and from work, I cross over the CP's main yard in town, Alyth Yard. This is where the engine facilities are also. There is

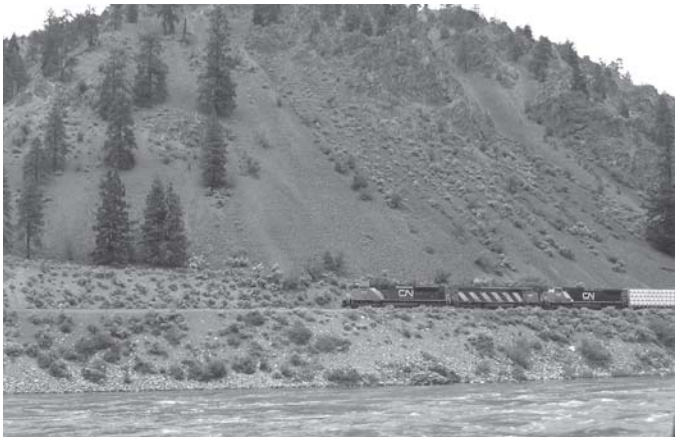
a constant parade of "Action Red" and the older, faded, nearly orange CP units, as well as many leased units. I occasionally get to see a Union Pacific locomotive. SOO locomotives frequently show up too. Mostly they are the newer red ones, but I have seen a couple of old dirty white units show up. Here in Alberta, at the foothills of the Canadian Rockies, the CP favors BIG, modern power. GE and GMD (Canada's version of EMD) six axle power is the norm. And rightly so, because just west of Calgary, the steep climb over the Rockies start. There are "lllllllllllooooonnnnnnggggggg" with emphasis on the long, container and grain trains constantly heading to and from the port of Vancouver. These trains are usually powered with 2 units pulling and one helper pushing on the rear.

About 5 hours from Calgary, there is one of those engineering marvels, the Spiral Tunnels at Kicking Horse Pass. This is one of those places that makes you say those railroad guys just wanted to do this badly. To gain altitude to get past a ridge of the Rocky Mountains, the CP had very steep grades. To lessen the grade, the CP bored a tunnel into the mountain that spiraled upward and curved 270 degrees, coming out on top of itself and gaining about a hundred feet. They liked it so much, that they did the same thing again and created the Spiral Tunnels. Plural! There is a place on the side of the TransCanada

Locomotive in the center of the photo (hard to see) is just emerging from the lower tunnel portal.

Highway to watch the lower Spiral Tunnel. It is quite overgrown with trees, but you can see glimpses of the trains crossing their own tails. This is very similar to Techapi loop out in California. The grades at Kicking Horse, are not the only obstacle overcome heading to Vancouver. The next obstacle is Roger's Pass. There are many snow and rock sheds at the pass. Also there are many tunnels too. Couple this with all the spectacular mountain scenery and there is a setting made for a Model Railroad. As I said, there are helper engines up the grade right out of Calgary. The helpers cut off just after Rodger's Pass at Field, BC. They turn around and help Eastbound trains over the same route, and head back to Calgary. The action is almost constant. During a quick trip back to the Island last month I saw about 10 trains crossing the Rockies.

There is another wonderful train watching spot on the way back to the Island. This is the Fraser River Canyon. The CP and CN have lines through the narrow canyon. One on one side of the river, and the other opposite. About halfway through the canyon they switch sides. Now, they are cooperating (mostly)



It is hard to drive and take ptotos of trains at the same time whilt driving at 90 kilometers per hour.

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

and running the eastbound on one track and the westbounds on the other, regardless of whose train it is. It is kinda' like the Joint Line in Colorado. During the same trip, I saw another 15 trains through the canyon. As the canyon is very narrow, barely wide enough for the river and two railroad lines, the highway gets shortchanged. Consequently, there isn't much place to stop and railfan. Thus, you have to do it on the fly and see what you can. But it is extremely busy, and there is never a lack of trains.

There is another line from Calgary, north to Edmonton. The CP tracks there are very busy. It seems every time I go by, there is at least one train. Oh yeah, I almost forgot about the steam train. Yes, there is a steam train. There is a regular tourist line running from Calgary to Vancouver. It is called the Rocky Mountaineer, and it is one of the most expensive train rides in the world. As high as $5000 for a person. On it, they have restored coaches, dining cars, and sleepers. And pulling it every third or so day is the Royal Empress, a restored CP 4-6-4 Hudson. Helping out on the steam train's days off are an A and B set of F Units, painted in the maroon and grey of CP's early diesel paint scheme.

I was sitting in a parking lot in a little place outside Calgary, waiting on my wife, and I heard a bell. I knew I was next to the tracks. But much to my astonishment, I heard steam train sounds, and then I saw it, the Royal Empress. What a surprise, and what a downer that I didn't have my camera with me. But, I take consolation in that even if I did, the train would have been gone before I could have got it out and turned on. I have tried since to see the train again, but it has thus far eluded me.

All in all, on the Mainland in Western Canada, is a very exciting railroad place. There is never a shortage of trains. And the scenery can be quite exciting too.

Mastering Modeling Yahoo Groups the Real Information Highway Pt II.

By MMR's Terry and Tracy Mitchell

In the last issue we started talking about Yahoo groups, blogs, or chat rooms as some of you call them. This time we will finish what we started and go into some more of our favorite for prototype and modeling scale groups. In case you haven't figured it out yet, we are Narrow Minded Modelers so the focus will be on Narrow Gauge RR's and NG scale/gauge.

Since the last issue of the Marker Lamp, we got many more ideas from the masses as to what is out there. We expanded the original list to include these new groups that were given to us by You, the readers. This means two things. First thing, this means that some of you actually read our gibberish, and second, maybe there is a regular column in this after all if someone is willing to take on the job.

1) SWNG - The Premier Narrow Gauge Group, where members from around the world can discuss modeling Narrow Gauge Railroads regardless of Scale. From 1:1 to Zn3 and beyond, if it's Narrow Gauge, this is the forum with some of the most talented modelers in the World. They have 360+ members. Of all the groups we belong too, this is by far the most fun of any group. The message board averages 480 messages a month during the last year, that comes out to 16 messages a day. The group's primary focus is NG, but there are Std gaugers in the membership as well. It has best been described as a group of Model RRers sitting and talking around a campfire. The group can stray off topic at times, but that is what makes it so much fun. "Feel the ARF!"

2) NWNG - To share model railroading techniques and projects, exchange prototype information, and general comradery. Focused on S narrow gauge, but all are welcome. As the name implies this is primarily for the Pacific NW, but all can join. They have 410+members. Some of the best modelers are found here too. 76 messages were posted last month.

3) 4L - The Loyal Legion of Logged-on Loggers; dedicated to the dissemination of information regarding logging prototypes and models. They cover all aspects of the industry, from actual logging, to saw milling and their attendant railroads; in other words, anything of interest to logging fans from around the world. The thundering exhaust of a Shay, Heisler, Climax or Rod Lokie as it struggles to haul the loads to the mill; the rhythmic chuff of a steam donkey yarder or loader as it's puncher "gives her the snoose"; the hard work of the choker setter in the brush; the Bull 'o the Woods yelling "daylight in the swamp". If you understood this paragraph, you will want to join. Another good group to be a part of if you are a modeler and even have remote interest in logging. This group has 1025+ members and is really active. They had 320 messages last month.

4) STMFC · Steam Era Freight Car Discussion Group. The purpose of this list is to discuss all aspects of North American freight cars of the steam era [1900-1960]. The objectives include the sharing of information about railroad freight cars including their operation and various techniques of building models of them. Emphasis is to be placed on the study of the prototype with a goal of producing models of them with as great a degree of accuracy as possible. If you are a rivet counter, then this is the place for you! It is a large group with over 1180 members and 581 messages posted in September.

5) RGS -This list is devoted to the discussion of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad. That discussion should be restricted to prototypical history and modeling the RGS. Another prototype RR group that is "The Source" for anything RGS. Another fun group to belong to especially when a new RGS book is published or some RGS artifact is found. This group has just under 600 members. They had 83 messages in September.

6) Denver South Park - Discussion and information exchange of The Denver, South Park, and Pacific Railroad, or SP for short. Not to be confused with the Espee Std Ga. Information sharing is encouraged not only for the DSP&P but the subsequent RR's to include the Colorado and Southern, from the beginnings of the DSP&P forward. Lively discussion about this wonderful and colorful Railroad insure the memory of the South Park will continue. Small membership for a small RR, but don't let that fool you, this group is really active for their size. They had 21 messages last month with slightly more than 270 members.

7) WSLC. This is short for the West Side Lumber Company in California. As the name implies this is for loggers. This is also a small group for a specific prototype, but you can still get modeling tips from the postings. This group has just under 500 members and 73 messages were posted last month.

8) On3 - This is a list for O Scale Narrow Gauge modelers who build to the three foot gauge in 1/4 inch scale. Open to all railroads - Western, Eastern, and Worldwide. This group has 1025+ members. This group talks mostly about On3, but can stray to the prototype if the urge hits them. 272 messages were posted in September.

Peter Bryan Father-Son Operating Session

July 3, 2006
Houston, Texas

News Release

At a time when a lot of model railroaders are seeking ways to involve young people in our hobby, Houstonian Peter Bryan is doing something about it. On July 3, Peter had a father and son operating session on his West Virginia Western HO railroad. Some "sons" were borrowed for the evening, but all had fun regardless. Some of the boys even asked their "fathers" to leave them alone, as they could "do it themselves." And they could. The West Virginia Western is a free-lanced railroad set in and around Huntington, WV, in the 1950s. It is an operations-oriented railroad with 6 main towns plus a couple of small towns. Easy DCC powers the road and RailOps guides the sessions.

Included in the session were: Peter Bryan and Brandon St.Clergy; Bob King and Drew; Greg Dargin and Darius; John and Leighton; Rick White and Rickey; Bob Barnett and Travis; Jim Cash and Cooper; Greg Kimborough and Greg Jr.; and Steve Sandifer and Jonathan Ball.

More information:
Peter Bryan, peterb@pdq.net, 713-939-8002

Special Contest in the Hill Country

Chuck Lind, MMR – Contest Chairman

Back at the Ft. Worth Convention there was a discussion with Terry Baccus, the former Scale Rails editor on if a scratchbuilt outhouse could merit in the contest based on the NMRA scoring points since it was considered too simple of a model to build. I also noticed a lack of models in the Contest Room in San Antonio and would like to see more people enter this next year.

Well I would like to find out the answer also, so here's the deal? At the LSR Hill Country Special being held in Roundrock this next June the LSR will be having a special contest (with a special award) to find out if a scratchbuilt outhouse can merit. While these buildings can also be in the Display, Online, or Offline structure category (depending on location) all outhouses will also be judges separately for a special award.

Do your research (the web is a great source) and be as creative as you want on building and detailing your outhouse, but remember we will be following the NMRA rules for judging the structure. I am giving everyone plenty of time to do the research and building so see you next year at the LSR with all those outhouses. By the way I have done the research and they were very simple lean to buildings up to very fancy buildings with all the victorian goodies added to them.

Build your best outhouse and see you next year.

Sign me up as an NMRA member and enter me in the drawing!

____ **Regular NMRA member:** $36/year, all rights and benefits but no *Scale Rails*

____ **Regular NMRA member:** $48/year, all rights and benefits including *Scale Rails*

Mail to:
NMRA Membership Contest
4121 Cromwell Rd.
Chattanooga, TN 37421

Other membership package options are available. For details and contest rules, visit www.nmra.org.

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For the Narrow Minded…

By Duane Richardson

It's been said that slow and steady wins the race. I don't know about you but that really describes the progress on the P&DR. The staging yard is complete and the wiring there is mercifully finished. I have installed a couple of decoders so I can at least move a few things around now. I'll be working on a few feet of mainline to finish up a couple of requirements for the AP before starting to lay out the next town. I have several other projects that have moved up on the list of things to do so we'll see how long it takes to get back to work out there. Time will tell…

In continuing our talk from last time about narrow gauge railroads and unique equipment, I would like to go over a car that was like no other. Currently at the Colorado Railroad Museum is D&RGW gondola #06229 more commonly known as the Alamosa Trash Gondola.

Gondola 06229 is truly unique. It was originally the flat car under CONX tank #15 and was operated on the Colorado & Southern. The flat car portion of CONX #15 was replaced with a steel underframe by the D&RGW in 1925 in the car shop in Alamosa. The original underframe emerged as a flat car but later had its 33" inch tall, 4 board sides added. The sides are bolted directly to the side sills instead of using stake pockets like most gondolas. The boards of the sides were just nailed to the stakes as there are no bolts visible. Originally, the car had American Car & Foundry 4' 6" arch bar trucks that were common to the CONX and TCX tank car fleets. It is possible that these came from the ex-Crystal River Railroad's Ingoldsby dump gondolas but I have not been able to confirm this.

There are several things that truly make this car unique. It has a mix of C&S and D&RGW hardware that is like no other. The end beam plate style washers and the brake rigging are all part of its C&S heritage. The brake chain, for example, hangs outside the truck which was a common C&S practice and wasn't changed by the D&RGW rebuild crew. It had Westinghouse K-1 brakes, tower couplers, Miner draft gear and plate bolsters. D&RGW AFE # 4745 shows that it entered service 10-24-30 and that they spent $288.78 to rebuild the car. The AFE talks of "Constructing a flat car from new and second hand parts, underframe and trucks from CONX #15 donated to carrier by Pond Bros. of Dulce, NM." AFE # 7575 shows that it was retired in November of 1970.

The 06229 also features a door on the A end of the car. The door uses hinges like those found on D&RGW or C&S reefers. The door was installed to allow a person with a wheelbarrow load to have access to the car and the inside was lined with sheet metal to protect the wood. It was used to haul off trash from the shops, station, offices and freight house. It was spotted on a stub end spur across from the Station and Office next to the Freight House. The car, when full, would then be hauled to the dump but Bob Richardson said that he never saw it move while he lived in Alamosa.

After the scrapping of the narrow gauge the car ended up in the possession of the Sundown & Southern. The Sundown & Southern was a privately owned venture north of Denver. They had purchased track, rolling stock and at least one steam locomotive and it was hoped for it to be a place where people could come and learn how to operate a real steam locomotive. After the owner passed away the equipment of the Sundown & Southern was sold at auction. The NRHS (National Railway Historical Society) purchased the car for $750 and it was planned to use the car for parts to restore Uintah caboose #3. The Colorado Railroad Museum traded the parts needed for the caboose to keep the gondola from being destroyed.

Even though most of the lining has rusted away now from years of being exposed to the elements, the rest of the car has been cosmetically restored by the Colorado Railroad Museum. She is painted the standard D&RGW MOW grey with black lettering and is on display at the museum.

I thought that this would be a great project to build. With all the mix of C&S and D&RGW parts it would be a challenging project. I started gathering various pictures from my books and off the Internet. The one that clinched the project for me was Micro-Trains release of their HOn3 Reefers. These cars run very well and the floor for the reefer is the same size as the CONX flat. It also has the side mounted hand brake chain roller. I used the floor from one of these cars and the brake details to begin working on this car. I removed the steel center sill and cut the bolsters off. After gluing the bolsters back on the car I built a new center sill out of wood. I added needle beams, queen posts and truss rods. I also ran a brake line through the car bottom as well. I scratchbuilt a new wood floor and sides for the car out of wood. For the sheet metal lining I used foil tape that was later painted and weathered. I used my PC to create the artwork for the decals, which were printed on my ALPS printer. It was a fun project to do and will make a fun operating situation for the yard operator on the P&DR. While I hoped to have photos ready in time to print with this article, I am still waiting on a few parts to come in. Once complete I'll have photos of this project on my website at http://www.purgatoryanddevilriver.com

Until next time...keep the boiler full, the fires hot and the wheels on the rails.

Tall Pine Lumber Company Railroad

By Chuck Lind, MMR

Back five years ago I said that if I didn't get enough material to fill an issue you would have to read about Narrow Gauge Logging, well that finally happened with this issue. I model a free-lance logging railroad, in the Sierra Mountains of California before OSHA and the environmentalist. The Tall Pine Lumber Company closely follow the West Side Lumber Company for most of its equipment, but by having a free-lance operation, it allows me to mix the various types of equipment and run those small logging engines I like, as well as an occasional large 3-truck shay.

My logging layout is in a 25'x30' 2-story building behind our house. The lower floor has my woodworking shop in it with the trains on the second floor, at least Laurie, my wife, always knows where to look for me.

Most of you know that I like to scratchbuild and so my layout is filled with structures and rolling stock that I have built over the years. With the Bachmann On30 equipment that has come on the market over the past few years, it has also been a boom for many of those kit bashing projects. Something about taking a cutting wheel to a $$$ brass model versus cutting on a $150 shay, plus they also run great.

I have been working on my present layout for just under 4 years. While the benchwork and the mainline are complete, it is still years away from being finished. I have scenery on about 50% of the layout, another part of the hobby I enjoy. I like to add scenery as I go (don't get burned out doing one thing) and then go back and keep adding details to the scene over time until I get that look of a 1930's logging railroad that is just getting by. I still have several switches to wire (the part I don't like) and a few more to build and install so I can operate rather than just chase trains.

I just finished being open for the Houston layout tours and I plan on being open on the way to and from the LSR Convention next June in Round Rock. If you are in the area you don't have to wait until next year, just give us a call to make sure we are home, and travel back in time when life was much simpler and the Shays ruled the forest.

Engines are being ready for a day's work in the woods. The day starts early and ends after dark.

Morning at the planer mill shows Shay #3 (the oldest engine on the roster) pushing a box car in to be loaded.

Shay #5 and a West Side caboose make their way up the hill to pick up a load of log cars. By the look of the hill the loggers have done their job.

The rush of the morning is over so there is time to take a little break at the engine house before the afternoon rush as the engines return to town.

Cowcatcher Division 1

by Chris Atkins

I hope the cooler weather has encouraged you all to get a lot of work done on your layouts. In September, I was lucky enough to attend the Great Basin Getaway in Utah with about 50 other operators, including four from Division 1. While perhaps not the highlight of the trip, it was definitely exciting to see it snow in September!

This was my second time at this event, that is held every other year, and it is definitely worth a flight to Utah. The group operated on Lee Nichols' Utah and Colorado Western, Ted York's Santa Fe Cajon Pass and Gary Peterson's Salt Lake Southern. The York and Nichols layouts were featured in Great Model Railroads a couple years ago.

The Cowcatcher Division is fortunate to be home to several very good train shows. One of my favorites is the October show put on by the Lockheed Martin Recreation Association's Model Railroad Club in their gym on Bryant-Irvin Rd. in Ft. Worth. As I'm writing this, the show has just wrapped up. The club has a permanent layout across the parking lot from the LMRA gym which is open to visitors during the show. Also, there are always several modular layouts on display on the show floor.

My favorite part of any show is the vendors. I enjoy walking around the show looking for that unusual item that will fit perfectly on my layout. While it is nice to know I will be able to pick up standard supplies from regular train show vendors like Division 1,s own Russ Covitt, I get a bigger thrill out of visiting various modelers' swap tables. I don't know if it is the intimate size of the show, or perhaps it is because the LMRA show is the first show of the DFW train show season and everyone is thinning out their train closets, but it always seems to me that some of my best finds have been found at the LMRA show.

LMRA also continues to be extremely generous in hosting the Cowcatcher Division's quarterly meeting. In August, about 20 of us got together at the LMRA Administration and where Denny Bullard demonstrated the procedures he used in making his Santa Fe stock cars. One of the methods he outlined was how he uses Scotch Tape in the construction of these cars. If you haven't made it to one of our get togethers, we'd love to have you come and introduce yourself. This is a great way to meet other modelers in your area. If you are a regular, I'd like to thank you for coming. Your participation is what makes these meetings. If you have any ideas about activities you would like to see us have, please drop me a note at chris@railroadmodelers.com . Also, if you have something you would like to share with the group in the form of a clinic, slide show presentation or whatever, let me know.

I haven't quite finalized a plan yet for the next show, but it will be November 18 at 10AM in room 1 of the LMRA Administration Building at 3400 Bryant-Irvin Rd. in Ft. Worth. I hope to see you there.

Bayou Division 2

by Jack Green

Club news of special interest is that Lou Schultz and crew are into a major wiring overhaul on his C&O. They are making a full fledged attack on the Gremlins that have made a home in the major yard at Hinton and other areas. They are shooting for testing later this year and back operational in early 2007.
The Crescent City Club will celebrate their 50th (that's right fifty) birthday on 28 October. I will have a write up of that function in the next issue.

Meet Bayou Division member, Walt Rieger.

Walt Rieger, 56, has been employed as an electronics technician for the past 35 years. Currently working for a local service shop, he repairs professional and consumer audio and video production equipment. He and his wife of 37 years, Lena, live in the Covington, LA area. They have one son, Craig.

My name is Walt Rieger, and a big Hello to the NMRA LSR membership. Jack has asked me to write about myself and introduce my layout.

I have been an NMRA member since 1983. My association with the hobby of model railroad started like many of us with the traditional Christmas train set at the age of 3. It was an American Flyer set, and I'm sure my dad bought and constructed that first layout as much for him as for me. I still can recall that layout, and the stage was set for a lifelong hobby. The switch to HO scale was made in 1960, and after reading an article by Allen McClelland on converting his GE Astrac controls to walkaround (MR Apr 66), I was determined to build a "proper" model railroad.

My first "true" attempt at building a walkaround type layout was started in the mid 80's. It was a double-deck design housed in a 12 x 16 room. As construction continued I was increasingly displeased with the size of the layout. So, after convincing my wife she needed a larger home, I started designing my dream layout.

After several design changes, construction started in August 2001. The present layout is housed in a 2000 square-foot room attached to my home. The plan and theme portray the Southern Railway CNO&TP 2nd district…The Rathole…in fall 1981. The track plan is a point to point design, running from Oakdale, TN to Danville, KY. My givens and druthers lean toward mainline running and scenic realism, but with a mainline run of approximately 800 ft. there are numerous sidings and yards requiring switching for the operation-minded individuals in my area.

At present, all benchwork has been completed, consisting of 2 sections of mushroom type double deck, a section of traditional double deck construction, as well as single deck construction around the outer perimeter. All valances have been constructed to allow for layout lighting, presently installed on

half of the layout. Trackwork is presently underway with plans to have the south end operational by the end of 2006. A combination of Micro Engineering flex track and handlaid track and turnouts are being used. NCE Digital Command Control is being installed with TTX Power shield breakers and reversers, along with Bruce Chubb's CMRI system and DCCOD track detectors as trackwork progresses. Full CTC will be implemented, and a model of the GRS panel that was located at Somerset, KY will be constructed.

Scenic wise, the layout will feature a series of LDE's from the prototype. For those familiar with the Rathole, features such as the two remaining tunnels and high deck girder bridge at Nemo, TN; the high deck truss bridges at New River, TN and Burnside, KY; and the coal prep plant at Revilo, KY will be modeled to name but a few.

Thank you all for this chance to introduce my layout and myself to the membership. Jack and I have discussed plans for a feature article in The Marker Lamp once some scenery is in place. So until then, Keep 'em Rollin'.

North East Texas Division 3

by Duane Richardson

Fall is here and the heat is almost gone. Another long, hot summer is behind us and we start looking forward to the train show season. Here in Division 3 we kicked off the show season with our first Division 3 Train Exhibit at the Nicholson Memorial Library. Three local clubs set up their layouts and the Time-Saver was set up to offer a chance for kids (both young and old) to operate. The show was a big success with attendance around 350 for the 2 days. We even made the Dallas Morning News with a nice article and a couple of photos. The nice part of all of this was that most of those in attendance were kids. After talking with club and Division 3 members, several parents were talking about setting something up for their kids. My thanks go out to all the clubs and volunteers who made the show a success. A special "Way to GO" goes out to the Division 3 Events Chairman, Tom Browning. After the initial meetings with the library, Tom took our idea and ran with it. It was his tireless efforts that made that weekend the enjoyable time that it was.

While we hope that our Exhibit will become an Annual Event we are looking forward to our normal monthly meetings. Starting in September we began a new set of clinics to teach scratchbuilding. The members wanted to start with Structures so I have told anyone that wants to take part to start looking for plans. At the September meeting we went over the tools and materials that can be used. In October we will be going over the actual construction phase of the project. For the demo model, Division 3 member Bob Brendle and I will be building the same version of a Mill. Bob will build his in Styrene and go over how it's done and the advantages and disadvantages, while I build the same building in wood. Don't let this opportunity pass you by. If you have ever wanted to learn how to scratchbuild or kitbash then this is a good place to start (remember that everybody is responsible for their own materials and tools). So…be looking for plans and if you have no experience remember to pick something simple. During all of this I'm sure we will all learn a little something from each other and keep this special part of model railroading alive.

The subject for the Modeler's Challenge for this next year hasn't been picked at the time of this writing but will be decided at our up-coming meeting. With the clinics for this fall covering building structures, I'm sure it will be something along those lines.

The Ft. Worth and Plano shows are both coming up as usual this winter. Both will be a good place to pick up a few supplies for the layout and maybe a few tips and tricks in the clinic rooms. We will, as always, have a NMRA/LSR table at the shows. Drop by and say Hi.

We are still sending out a couple of emails each month about the meetings. If you aren't getting these please let me know so we can get your email address.

I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Cen-Tex Division 4

by Bob Alson, Jr.

This report will be short and sweet because most of what I have to report is contained in the article introducing the Hill Country Special. However, we have had a couple of shows/ jamborees in the division. The Temple Show was Sept. 16 and 17 at the Mayborn Center in Temple. The crowd was larger than in previous years and they were treated to the same great fun time. Our Hill Country Special Operations layout made its premiere at the show and the sessions was refined a bit as the time ticked away. **Mike Barrett, Jack Merkel, Stan Miller, Gordon Locke** and a few others oversaw the layout and engaged several folks in giving it a run. The response was good and our guys learned a bunch about how to present the learning experience of operations.

By the time you read this edition of the Marker Lamp, the Round Rock Jamboree will be history. Yours truly presented a basic scenery class and met many potential new members. It is amazing what a convention that will be as good as the 2007 shindig can do for membership. As usual, a big highlight of the jamboree was the layout tour. This is too good of an opportunity to get ideas for you own use by imitating some opf the ingenuity seen on other's pikes.

That's all for now. If you'd like to be a part of the planning action of the Hill Country Special, get in touch with me and we will make that happen.

Happy Modeling!

Division 5

by Dave Lamberts

Once or twice yearly, the Lubbock Model Railroad Association (LMRA) holds "playday." We just finished the one for this fall, which was held Saturday, October 14. The playday consists of setting up both the club's own layout and the modules which are built and kept by the individual members. In addition, many members brought their own contributions, including O scale, N scale and Z scale layouts. The entrance fee was $1 for adults, but free to kids 10 and under.

We did several things differently this year, which may be of interest to the *Marker Lamp* readership. In what I though was a great idea in marketing, we printed up many hundreds of brochures and distributed them to many grade schools in Lubbock. Has as a result, we had an incredible turnout and had kids filling the room all day long.

We bought pins and whistles from JRC/Iguana Railway company and sold them to the kids at a small markup. The whistles were especially popular as they mimicked a locomotive whistle.

One of the most popular parts of this fall's playday was the photo shoot. One of our members made a simple one-dimensional cut out of a train engine with an open window where the engineer would be. The kids could stand behind the cut out and stick their head or arm out of the window. I took a photograph of the set up and we sold the prints for $4:00 each. We even had black and pink engineer caps for the boys and girls to wear for their photograph. By the time the day was over, I had taken more than 30 pictures of different children. We are hoping this effort may lead to some younger blood in the club.

The tricky part of this project was that the photos had to be printed on the spot. If anyone wants to know the details of how I did this, please e-mail me at DavidWL1944@aol.com.

Division 6

by Doyle Bond, MMR

There were three entries in the contest at the New Braunfels train show. All three were merit entries. Thanks to Charlie Spangler for helping me with the judging.

Because Division 6 has a large territory, I plan on having two Division meetings next year. One in the Spring to be held in San Antonio and in the Fall in Corpus Christi. The plans are not yet final, but each will have a similar format. Each will be held at a local Library and will feature clinics and a forum on the Master Modeling program.

Please send me info about potential dates, locations, subjects, etc. My address and e-mail can be found in the listing of Directors.

Hope to see you at one of the meetings.

That's all for now, I gotta go play with my trains, Doyle.

Division 7

by Don Kimmell

Greetings from North Louisiana, where it has finally rained—of course it was on the way back from a Train Show!

First off, I will cover upcoming events in the piney woods of North Texas/Louisiana.

On Saturday 28/ Sunday 29 will be the Cotton Belt Rail Historical Society, Tyler Tap Chapter's show—at the Harvey Convention Center located on the East Texas Fair Grounds—cost $5.00—this is a revival of the show of past years—not a huge one, but a rather nice one!

The next weekend—4&5 November—will be the Texas and Pacific Railway Museum's "Model Train Show and Shopping Extravaganza"-(not my words, but theirs) in Marshall, Texas at the Marshall Civic Center—on Hwy. 59, 2 miles north of I-20. Another good little show, a whole lot of fun—some of the larger vendors are planning to attend, so don't miss it!

And last but not least, do not forget the Northwest Louisiana Train Show at the Bossier Civic Center on November 18th and 19th. I know Rodger West and his wife have been working very hard to get this one booked up!

The Centex Mod Crew sure did a great show back in September! I understand that their numbers were up this year, and as a member of the Ark-La-Tex Modular Club who was there, we sure had a great time! Bob, Bill and the rest of the crew should be congratulated on another well run show! We had fun! You must see what they have done to their "Clubhouse"…very nice upgrade. And as far as I could tell, everyone had a great time.

If you missed the LMRA show, you really missed a great one! They had the largest number of vendors I have ever seen, who had some real killer prices! Their numbers were up also, are we seeing a return of the "smaller" train show? I don't know, but Bob, Jerry (who wasn't there Sunday-Dallas home game) Jim and Crew, sure did seemed pleased. And we did have a great time.

Everyone should mark their calendars for the upcoming, Annual Longview Show—first weekend in March—put it down, last year Homer and crew sold out, most vendors I have ever seen there in 10+ years.

The Sue Lines- Dr. Kamm- are moving right along, the usual weekly operating secession—I got this report from a "operator"-as Danny likes to call himself.

The KCS Holiday Express is coming—if you want the schedule please visit their web site and get the dates and locations—I know I will be on the first part, and I am sure there will be upcoming "ELF" reports if my sources are right.

The Holiday Express is moving along, we have added over 50 new lights, installed a couple of new bus lines, built a new church, a couple of houses, added over 80 more people, etc…sure is fun when you don't have to buy anything, just build'em and figure where to put them, it is nice to have a "sugar daddy'!

That's it; Have Fun! Play Trains.

Texas Gulf Division 8

by Ray Byer

No Report Received

Continued from page 11

Mastering Modeling Yahoo Groups the Real Information Highway Pt II.

9) Sn3 - 3 foot narrow gauge railroads, both real and 1/64 scale, are the main focus. Also included are info about products, 'how-to', mutual help and general comradery. 675 members and is very specialized, but since it is NG, we had to include it. Besides modeling techniques and prototype information have no scale. This group has some of the best modelers worldwide. 229 messages were posted last month.

10) HOn3 -HO scale modeling of 3 foot narrow gauge RR's. An information exchange of ideas, tips and help between members to help make HOn3 narrow gauge modeling fun and easy. All subjects related to narrow gauge and modeling in HO are welcome. Great tips are found here also. Membership is 1307 which is a large group. And really active. 417 messages last month. They can beat a topic to death at times with the "I agree" and "This is true" messages. But still fun to look at though.

11) Colorado Narrow Gauge -This Yahoo Group was created for the discussion of all topics related to Colorado's narrow gauge railroads, and mining history. They strive to foster the sharing of accurate historical information. Membership is just over 310 and is another good source for Colo NG. This sight is run by Mark Evans, one of the foremost authorities of Colo NG. Or as we like to say, Colo Std Ga. Anything smaller than 3 ft ga is Narrow Gauge, anything larger is Broad Ga. This site also has a link www.narrowgauge.org

12) Silverton This list will be for the discussion of and sharing information for the railroads that served Silverton Colorado [4 RR's plus the modern day tourist line, the Durango & Silverton]. This list will tend more towards the historical and prototype, although modelers are welcome to share their creations as well. Another NG list. This one has 390 members.

13) DRGW Devoted to the discussion of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (and its predecessors) including standard and narrow gauge. Discussion of current operations and interesting sightings on former Rio Grande trackage are also welcome. This group is large, with well over one thousand members. Fairly active too; they had 326 messages in Sept and constintentely have over 300 messages in a month.

14) ATSF This is THE Santa Fe list for modelers and prototype fans of all ages Although the Santa Fe itself is no more, its memory in modeling and archiving lives on within this group. A great source of information for the ATSF. This group just has over 725 members and posted 172 messages in Sept.

15) MOPAC Information for both prototype and modelers of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, Texas and Pacific Railroad and any MoP related activities. Another good group on a specific prototype found here in the SW. This group has 524 members.

16) MKT The Katy List This list is intended as a discussion list for the Missouri-Kansas-Texas (Katy) Railroad; all topics relating to the MKT are welcome (such as operations, history, passenger trains, locomotive fleet, etc) as long as it is relevant to the Katy and its predecessors or successors. Great little site for a great little RR. This is the RR that got us started in modeling, so for us it is still a sentimental favorite of ours. This group has 390 members and averages slightly under 100 messages a month

RAILSPOT is a regional railfan list server whose purpose is to allow those railfans in the states of Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana to swap information that may be of use to those who are interested in the operation of area railroads. This Group's focus is on railroad operating information, train sightings, history, photo/watching locations, trip reports, accessibility of sites, and other Rail related stuff. This is group to find out if any unusual rail activity is happening or just plain train sightings. This group has 834 members and is quite activethey run over 500 messages a month.

This concludes the top yahoo groups we frequent the most, but that is not all of them we belong to or frequent from time to time. These are just our favorite one's to look at. There are plenty of others to pick from. Seek and Ye shall find.

The Northern division of TNT decided to not include the Canadian RR groups because he thought we down here in the South wouldn't care very much goes on in the Great White North , and quite frankly, he is right. By far the best things to get out of these groups are the modeling tips and techniques, and the friendship that you make. Sort of like the pen pals we had in our youth.

Back to modeling.

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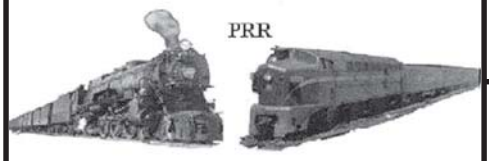

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